

NewsRelease

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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Sept. 5, 2003

RELEASE NO. 03-061

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

THE STORY OF PHI, THE WORLD'S MOST ASTONISHING NUMBER

Throughout history, the astonishing number known as the "Golden Ratio" has intrigued mathematicians, scientists, artists, and theologians. This number is found in the leaf arrangements of plants, the structure of spiral galaxies, the symmetry of quasicrystals, the art of Salvador Dali, and the music of Debussy.

Dr. Mario Livio, senior astrophysicist at the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI), will speak on "The Golden Ratio: The Story of PHI, the World's Most Astonishing Number" at a colloquium at 2 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 9, at NASA Langley's H.J.E. Reid Conference Center.

Media Briefing: A media briefing will be held at 1:15 p.m. at the H.J.E. Reid Conference Center, 14 Langley Blvd., NASA Langley Research Center. Members of the media who wish to attend should contact Kimberly W. Land at (757) 864-9885 or 344-8611 (mobile) for credentials.

The "Golden Ratio" is beloved by numerologists and mystics who claim that the ancient Babylonians, the builders of the pyramids, were guided in their every action by adherence to the Golden Ratio. In his talk, Livio will bring the "Golden Ratio" to life, by telling the story of both the math and the myth.

Livio received his Ph.D. in theoretical astrophysics from Tel Aviv University in Israel. From 1981 to 1991, he was a physics professor at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and joined STScI in 1991.

Author of over 300 scientific papers and two popular books, "The Accelerating Universe" and "The Golden Ratio," Livio has received numerous awards for research and excellence in teaching. He has done much fundamental work on the topic of accumulation of mass onto black holes, neutron stars, and white dwarfs, as well as on the formation of black holes and the possibility of extracting energy from them.

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